MONSIEUR PICHELMÈRE

BY

S. BARING GOULD

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MONSIEUR PICHELMÈRE

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MONSIEUR PICHELMÈRE

A little while before the outbreak of the Franco-German War, a German barber settled himself into a shop in a large village or small town in France, at no great distance from the frontier. He was young and unmarried, had a head elaborately frizzed, and a chin smooth as glass; but his moustaches were, as a lady said, adorable. A wine shop is known by its

bush, an inn hangs out a sign. The bush and sign of the barber's establishment were his own head of hair.

He did a good custom, for a barber. It is not a trade that leads to a fortune ; it is, however, a steady and constant one, like that of the baker and the butcher. As men must eat, so beards and heads of hair will grow. Therefore a barber is a necessity.

When the war broke out, this German barber, who was known in his own land as Picklmeyer, was in difficulties. He had run away from Fatherland to escape military conscription. He was not a naturalised Frenchman, and therefore could

not be called on to serve in the French army. If he went into Germany he would be punished as having deserted Fatherland, and most certainly would be sent with rifle in hand against the French, to water Gallic soil with his blood, and manure its vineyards with his bones. He did not relish the prospect.

Moreover, in France, he was doing a respectable business. If he left his shop, he would most assuredly find, after the war, that it was occupied by another barber, who had swept all the custom to himself.

So Herr Picklmeyer, who in France was known as Monsieur Pichelmère, resolved on

sticking to his shop and business. He turned a deaf ear to the summons issued to all Germans abroad to return to their country and to military service, and continued to shave French chins and shampoo and curl Gallic heads.

Then ensued that succession of disasters, when the poor French received buffet after buffet, were knocked this way and that way, till they, lost all moral as well as physical courage, and in their despair committed incredible follies.

And now came a time of trial upon Picklmeyer. At first he came to endure inquisitiveness and insults offered by his customers, together with threats as to what

they would do with the Prussians as soon as they reached Berlin. This was the first stage. The second was that Picklmeyer was left severely alone. The French of that Commune had concluded that it was unpatriotic for them to submit to be shaved and frizzed by German hands. That was bad, but worse was coming.

The French had organised bodies of franc-tireurs, who were of very little use, but blustered and fired guns without impeding the German advance in the least. All at once the craze of spies broke out and the French began to account for their disasters in a manner less humiliating than the acknowledgment of inferiority, by declar-

ing that they harboured spies who carried or sent information to the Germans. They were betrayed—woe to the betrayers!

Then in the little town where was M. Pichelmère, everyone at once concluded that the little barber was a spy. He was German—why had he not gone to his own country when war broke out? Obviously, that he might remain in France as a spy. Had he not enquired about the whereabouts of the armies, as to the heroic exploits of the franc-tireurs? was not that evidence that he was there, in their midst, collecting information?

No sooner had the people come to this conclusion than the mob assembled, in

which were a number of franc-tireurs and their commanding officer, and with immense gesticulations and shouts, the mob proceeded to denounce the little hairdresser and then set itself in motion towards his shop with the intention of tearing him to pieces, shooting or hanging him, the only open question with them being the manner in which he was to be hustled out of this world.

M. Pichelmère was sharpening his razors on a leathern belt when a violent blow at his shop door sent away the panes flying, and in a moment his house was invaded by a crowd, all yelling, swearing, menacing, gesticulating together.

"He is a spy."

"We are betrayed by these accursed Prussians."

"They should be burnt alive."

"Let us seize on his correspondence. Ha! what have we here?"

Poor Pichelmère had been composing a copy of verses, having nothing else to do, on a certain Gretchen with whom he had once been enamoured. But he had not seen or heard of Gretchen for many years; she was probably married by this time, yet the thought of Gretchen remained as a flowery poetic spot in his memory.

"See, here is his correspondence. He is caught in the act. Who can read German?

Let this epistle be deciphered at once." But there was not an individual in the mob that could make anything out of the mysterious characters. Then the officer of the franc-tireurs pushed forward and said imperiously :

" Hand the treasonable letter to me. I will forward it to headquarters."

" But," exclaimed one of the crowd, " we are not to postpone his execution till we have learned the contents of this letter."

" Certainly not," answered the officer. " But all must be conducted in form. I constitute a court. What have you to say for yourself, miserable dog of a Prussian ? "

"I am not a Prussian. I come from the Palatinate."

"What Palatinate?"

"The Baerische Pfalz."

"Hear him. He speaks something that no one can understand. That in itself constitutes treason. Prisoner, what stands written in the letter we have seized?"

"It is a love poem—to a demoiselle for whom I feel the noble passion."

"He confesses to carrying on the correspondence through a woman as intermediary, who transmits the information to the general in command."

"I am a haircutter," pleaded Pichelmère "I have lived seven years in this place. I

have wronged no one. I have shaved and curled heads and have waxed moustaches; I have left my country——"

"You hear him," said the officer. "He admits that he is a Prussian, and that he is in the pay of Prussia. He says that Prussia is his country. Show me a letter from the young lady."

"She has not written a line to me."

"He confesses that he has destroyed the orders that have been sent him from Berlin. Why should he have done this, unless they were of an incriminating nature? The man deserves death. Besides, we are franc-tireurs. We have assumed our arms to fight for our country and to kill Prussians.

Shall we catch a Prussian and not kill him ? "

" I have a new rope," shouted a packer. " We will hang him to the first tree."

" Good heavens ! " cried another. " We have no trees but poplars, and they are trimmed so as to have no boughs."

" I will get my cleaver and cut off his head," roared a butcher.

" Your shop is at the end of the town; we cannot wait," said another. " Let him be shot."

" A soldier's death is too good for such as he."

" He shall be shot," ordered the officer of the franc-tireurs.

"But I am not tried," gasped the hairdresser.

"Do you insult us as well as outrage us," exclaimed the officer.

"And betray us—the movement of our troops, the concentration of our forces?"—shrieked another.

"Comrades," said the officer, "surround him, and march him into the square. He shall be shot."

Just then in rushed the curè, greatly alarmed, and did his utmost to save the unhappy hairdresser.

"He is a good man; he has executed a harmless avocation. There is no evidence that he is a spy."

"M. le Curé, concern yourself with your altar and leave these matters to those whose duty it is to fight the enemy without and within."

"Then give him time to prepare his soul for the great change."

"M. le Curé, this fellow is a Protestant, and is no concern of yours."

Rebuffed, unable even to gain time, the curé was forced to fall back.

Then up came the Mayor. He was an intelligent man, a doctor; and he knew and respected the little barber. But his efforts were unavailing. Jurisdiction in matters of life and death was not with him.

"M. le Maire, if this were a matter of

merchandise, or of sanitation, we would hearken to you. But it is one of spying and treason. He shall die!"

So the barber was marched into the market-place. On all sides fists were shaken, execrations were launched against him, and some market women threw eggs and scraps of vegetables that were unsaleable.

Then a clearing was made, the crowd divided, and allowed an open space around M. Pichelmère, who was ordered to stand with his back to the church, and the franc-tireurs were drawn in a line, and ordered to load their rifles.

The Captain was on the point of ordering presentation of arms when a cry was heard,

and forth from the crowd burst a young and beautiful girl, who rushed to the barber, threw her arms round him, and cried to the soldiers—

"Monsters! Shoot, destroy us both! I am a Frenchwoman. Dip your hands in my blood. This is my beloved—my betrothed, to whom I was to be married next week—Thursday, at ten a.m."

The franc-tireurs were aghast. The crowd whispered:

"This is Marie Lequex, the rich farmer's only child. Who thought that she was to be married to this hairdresser—the Prussian?"

"But it is a fact. See how distracted she

is! See how she loves him! Mon Dieu, it is ravishing! It is affecting! I weep."

"Monsters!" cried Marie. "Would you know why my Henri has not joined the Prussians? Why he has abjured his detested Fatherland? Why he has steeped himself to the lips in French ideas, and become almost a Frenchman? It has been because he has loved me, and I have adored him. The Beautiful Passion even changes a man's nationality."

"Mes amis," said the Captain, "I think we have been on the verge of making a great mistake. He is not a Prussian. Love has transformed him into a Frenchman. Let us respect the adorable, noble

passion, the only force that, in this century, can work miracles. Heep—heep—hoorah! Right about face, shoulder arms, march." And the franc-tireurs went off to search in a cabbage field whether any Uhlans were hidden there.

Then Marie Lequex, still clinging to M. Pichelmère, and devouring him with her lovely eyes drew him out of the market-place, out of the the press, till they were together in the highway that led, as all roads lead, in one direction to Paris, in the other to nowhere, and seeing that they were alone she released him.

Herr Pichelmère looked bewildered. The dews of fear of death had taken the curl

out of his elaborately frizzled locks, and the waxed moustaches drooped. He looked with dazed eyes at Marie.

"Mademoiselle! I have not the honour! I—I—I——"

"Make as hard as your legs can carry you for the German frontier."

"But, mademoiselle, about our betrothal —about our marriage on Thursday next at 10 a.m.."

"Well—I have saved your life."

"But—I have not had the honour of seeing you before. I have certainly never dressed your head."

"Bah! What impracticable, matter of fact men you Germans are. You have no

imagination, no enthusiasm. You are bodies and not souls. No, I have never seen you before, nor have you me—yet I have saved your life. Now be off. May I never see such a jackanapes again."

HANGMAN'S CROSS

HANGMAN'S CROSS

There had been for some five years a very promising tin mine at work at Red Roche; many men had been employed, a great mess had been made of the land, and a lovely ravine through which the river burst from its moorland cradle, had been nearly blocked by the rubbish heaps thrown out. Not only so, but the crystalline stream had been polluted.

But the world must advance. Men must work, that occupation should be found for hands in England, so as not to force men to emigrate; that is what we all desire, and if a pretty piece of landscape suffers it cannot be helped. A century hence nature will have healed all the scars and drawn a veil of verdure over the most hideous heaps of débris.

Now Red Roche was so full of promise under an intelligent Cornish captain, a man who had worked underground since he was a boy, that every miner employed was confident that there was work there to engage him for years to come, and what was more, that this mine would bring in a large per-

centage to investors in it. It did pay, and paid a dividend. What more was wanted?

But some people are not satisfied to let well alone; those who had money in Red Roch wanted to have something better than five per cent. on their outlay, they wanted ten, fifteen, twenty per cent.; and to obtain this they resolved that they must bring to bear on Red Roche the intelligence of a captain who had not made himself, but had been made—of a man not experienced in the hard school of life, but one shaped and stuffed by a Mining School. In a word, the company thought that science should be brought to bear on Red Roche instead of rough intelligence. Accordingly Cornish

Zackie got his dismissal, and the management of the tin mine was entrusted to Mr. Simon Tuball, who had got his certificate from the College of Science and was very self-confident, and knew all about modern systems, and despised everything that was not up-to-date.

The first thing done by Captain Tuball was to condemn the pumping apparatus. Thereupon a new pump and wheel, on an entirely new principal, had to be fitted. The second thing done by Captain Tuball was to condemn the system of working in the adits, and to propose the introduction of machinery that would do fifty times the work of men at less expense. Accordingly

a new steam engine, with its straps and borers and picks, was ordered and set up. The third thing done by Captain Tuball was to reject as barbarous the crushing apparatus and puddles. All that also had to be made on a new system.

Now the result of this enormous outlay was that there was not only no dividend at the end of the year, but there was a heavy call on the shareholders. However, they made no demur, there must be an initial outlay to ensure the enormous profits that would come to them as the result. The captain, it was shrewdly believed, received a nice little sum from the manufacturers for recommending their machinery, and obtain-

ing orders for it; so that, although the new plant cost the shareholders a large sum, it brought in nice lump sums to Captain Tuball.

Now came the captain's fourth achievement. By scientific method he convinced himself and his shareholders that Captain Zackie had done quite wrong in working in the direction in which he had found ore, and that the only right, because scientific, way to go to work was to leave the lode that had promised and did fulfil its promise and to go in another direction as dictated by science and opposed to common sense. The miners grumbled, the foremen protested, but where was the good? Captain Tuball

was master of the situation, and had been better taught than they—at college.

The result of this fourth movement of the captain was that there was no dividend the second year; the company fell into bankruptcy, water broke into the mine, drowned the adits, covered up the promising lode, and overwhelmed all the new works, which neither promised nor yielded anything.

Then Captain Tuball departed, with all his certificates, to some other confiding company, and all the miners who had been engaged at Red Roche for seven years, five of prosperity and two of adversity had to depart and look elsewhere for occupation.

Now among these men was one named Moses Fewins—a young fellow, frugal, temperate, hard-working, who lodged for all the seven years with a widow, at very moderate cost, and had managed to save up a nice little sum of money.

The widow in whose house Fewins had lodged had a daughter Margaret, and insensibly the two young people had been drawn together, yet had never quite reached the stage of walking out in company, and not a word had been spoken as to an engagement. Moses liked and respected Margaret, and she thought that there could not be a miner of his age who was comparable with him for sobriety, steadiness, and general

integrity. Their liking for each other was based on the surest foundation of mutual esteem.

As Moses said to himself, there never was a girl who was cleaner, more active, more obliging and sensible. If he had not spoken, the reason was that for the last two years Red Roche had been going on in so unsatisfactory a manner that the miners engaged on it had been anticipating a catastrophe, and Moses would not ask a girl to be his till he had some work that was likely to last. And now the mine was shut down ; and Moses was not the man to link a girl to him when he might have to go away to America or the Straits Settlements

to find work, without a prospect of return to England for many years.

Full of trouble in mind what to do and where to go, Moses Fewins sat on a timber baulk, near the abandoned mine, nursing his head. Then up to him came Philip Hart, a shrewd miner also out of work, a fellow with a cunning twinkle in his eye, and one who avoided looking any man straight in the face.

"Why, Moses, poorly?"

"No, Philip; only worriting where to be off to."

"So you are going off?"

"Yes; there's nothing to be done here."

"I'm going also for a bit. But my wife

and childer be here, so I can't go far, nor be away long."

"I have no ties," said Moses. "That is to say—but—I think if I could find work I'd come back here."

"You've been a frugal and saving man, and if you like may be a gentleman for awhile."

"I don't deny," said Fewins, "that I've earned a little money, and that's just one of my troubles, I don't see clear what I'm to do with it."

"Do with your money! Enjoy it while you may."

"That's not my way," said the young man. "I want to hoard it; I don't know

how long before I find work, and I must provide against—well, some day I may marry."

"That's about it," said Hart with a laugh. "And whom you'll marry ain't a secret to me."

Moses said nothing to this. Hart took a seat on the baulk beside him, and after a pause observed:

"I'm in the same predicament. I have a matter of a few pounds, and I must go somewhere. I won't take it with me, lest I spend it; and what to do with it in the meantime I don't know."

"I suppose there's the bank one might put it into."

"Oh get along with your banks. They are always breaking."

"Many do. My father had saved over a hundred pounds, and that was with Messrs. Ground and Grit. But they failed, and he was forced to put up with a penny in the pound, about eight and eight-pence; and then the lawyers came down on him for looking after his interests, and took all that and some pounds besides."

"Have nothing to do with banks," said Philip.

"I don't think I shall. I've heard something about Consols. What sort o' gentlemen be they."

"Well, there I can answer you," said

Hart. "I was once over to Spain, at a place called Cadiz, and there I got into a bit of trouble, and had to get one of these Consols, or Consuls, to interfere. Them Consols be gentlemen kept by the Government in seaport towns to mind the sailors when they get into rows; and we're expected to pay 'em with our hard-earned gains. That's what is meant by putting into the Consols. You may put money into them, but you won't get it out again. That Consol at Cadiz did no good, he only talked, and I got clear by cutting away—that's how I got off."

"Then" said Moses, "I won't have nothing to do with Consols.

"There you are right," said Philip Hart. Then after another pause he said, "Now look here. I've the greatest confidence in you, Moses, and I'm going to put away my little savings where I know they will be safe; but in the chance of anything happening to me while I am away I should like you to know all about it, so that you might be able to hand the money over to my poor wife and children. I'm going to hide it."

"Hide it?"

"Yes, hide it—where none can find, because none will look. But in the chance of my never coming back, I do want someone to know about it, someone straight as a whistle, that he may act towards my money

as he would wish to have acted by his. If I die, Moses"—Philip wiped his nose—"you'll deal justly by me, and give it all to the widow and the orphans."

"Of course I will, Philip."

"You see," said Hart, "if I took the savings I have laid by along with me, and anything happened, there'd be nothing for the poor dear widow and orphans. Suppose anything happened to you, Moses, what about your little leavings?"

"Oh, they ain't such little leavings, I can assure you," said Fewins with some pride. "I might make a will."

"Get along with a will," said Hart "There'd be fifty pounds for proving it, and

fifty pounds for the lawyers as well. My brother died worth thirty pounds, and he made a will. I know it cost me seventy to prove that, and I was out of pocket by the transaction."

"I'll tell you what—I'll hide it," said Moses.

"There you act wisely. But suppose you die when absent. Do you want it to go to anyone?"

"Well," said Fewins, hesitatingly, "yes; I'd like to leave it to Margaret Westaway."

"Now," said Philip, "we're both in the same box. Let us make common cause, and hide our savings in one and the same place. Then if aught bad chances to me

you'll take my hoard out of its hiding-place and give it to the poor widow and orphans, and if anything bad chances to you, then I'll give yours to Margaret Westaway."

"Yes," said Moses, after a long consideration, "I agree to that. Now, where is the place?"

"Then I'll show you to-night. We must hide the money to-night."

"I should like to know where."

"At Hangman's Cross."

. . . . .

Hangman's Cross was an old dilapidated monument, that may have marked a way, or was an indication of a manor. It stood near a well or spring, and this led some to

believe that the cross had been erected over a fountain that had marvellous properties, or was supposed to have such. At the present day it possessed no remarkable qualities. The water oozed away in a mire, only a few cattle drank of it and more befouled it with their feet. The cross was of granite and stood on a pedestal of three stages. One of the arms had been knocked off.

Why it was called Hangman's Cross no one knew. There was no legend connected with the cross in which a hangsman played a part. But the place was regarded with superstitious fear. It was said that a fiery serpent lay coiled up in the centre of the

pedestal, and that if disturbed it crept forth and drank water at the well; thereby it poisoned the water and as the overflow ran away through mire and leaked down into the main stream, it poisoned that stream, and brought plague and murrain on all cattle who drank of it. Whenever a disorder broke out among the sheep, or even among the people of the place, it was always held that this was due to the drinking of the water vitiated by the fiery serpent of Hangman's Cross.

As to the destruction of the Cross, no one thought of it; that would be to let loose the serpent. Indeed, so much afraid were the people of it that they avoided the Cross

at night, and never ventured to meddle with it by day.

That the disorders which occasionally ravaged the village and the flocks and herds were due to the fouling of the spring by the cattle themselves, that never occurred to any; and the villagers accordingly took no precaution against such a contingency.

The evening was dark which ensued on the conversation recorded between Moses Fewins and Philip Hart. The former was a little startled when Hart suggested Hangman's Cross as a suitable place for concealing the money, but on consideration he assured himself that no spot could be safer, walled round with the fears of the villagers,

and as to the burning fiery serpent—he did not believe in it. That was an old wives' tale, unworthy of entertainment by any sensible man who had received a Board School education.

Accordingly Fewins started from the widow's house with a bag in his pocket that contained five-and-twenty pounds. At a corner, according to arrangement, he met Philip Hart.

"Brought your money?" asked Philip. "How much?"

"Five and twenty sovereigns."

"Any silver?"

"None—all in gold."

"That is well, it will occupy less space.

Here is my leather purse, stuffed as well; but I have more money to stow away than you—wish I had ten times the sum."

The two men walked on, side by side, without saying much. Presently Moses asked:

"Anything ailing you, mate?"

"I'm crying. I can't help it. The poor widow and children. Poor things! Poor things," said Philip Hart.

"But bless me, you are not dead."

"No, but you see, this is something like being present at one's own funeral. There is the savings of fifteen years—here a little, there a little, spared—and now I am com mitting it to the earth, and don't know if I shall ever see it again."

"Hope for the best. I've already heard of something."

"What's that?"

"Well, there are granite works at St. Breward. I'd rather do proper mining than quarrying; but if the mining is dead or dying, then I must not be nice, and take up what I can.

"It's lowering for a miner to turn quarryman," said Philip. "I'd go abroad. I have heard of poor miners, poor when they went out, returning rich as dukes."

"I do not care to be rich as a duke, only well enough off to have a house——"

"And wife of my own, eh?"

Moses did not answer.

The two men had now come out upon the moor where stood Hangman's Cross.

"Keep to the right," said Philip, "or you'll get half-way up your calves in the bog."

There was a small crescent moon, very silvery and very slight, affording just sufficient light to enable the two men to see their way, and to distinguish the disfigured cross that rose before them.

"How much have you got to put away?" asked Moses.

"Weigh it," answered Philip, and passed the bag to his comrade.

"It is heavy."

"Aye—a hundred pounds."

"I shouldn't have supposed you could

have saved so much. You were rather a drinking man."

"Ah, appearances were against me!" said Philip.

"And you are not afraid of leaving a hundred pounds here?"

'Not I. But I should be afraid were it a bank."

Hart removed a short crowbar from his shoulder.

"Now see this," said he. "One of the stones at the base of this old cross is loose."

Philip Hart produced a small lantern and struck a light, then kindled the wick within, and threw his jacket over the lantern.

"We must not show a light," said he

"but we shall need one. There is not enough moon to serve our purpose, and what there is is winking through yon thorn bush, confusing rather than illuminating."

Hart went down on his knees, on the side of the cross away from the well, and then disclosing the light of his lantern, sought out a loose joint in the blocks that formed the base of the cross. Having discovered what he sought, he inserted the end of his bar and with very little trouble worked it in sufficiently to lever out the block. Then he thrust his lantern to the opening, and the ray entered and revealed a cavity in the midst of the pedestal.

"There, Moses!" laughed he. "You

see the nest is empty. There is no fiery serpent here. I warrant you the monks of old hid their treasure here and then set agoing the story of the dragon to frighten folk off from looking here for what was concealed."

"Very like," said Fewins.

"Count your sovereigns," said Philip; "because if I'm to be responsible for them, I'd like to know they were right."

"Oh! right they are," answered Moses; and undoing his little bag he poured out the gold before the eyes of Hart.

'There!" said he. "Now let me count your hundred pounds."

"That I can't let you," answered Philip.

"'Cos why? I've sealed up the bag. You see there is a seal on it. If I hadn't done that you'd have been welcome. You can give this bag, without the seal being broken, to the widow and children, and mind and tell them they are all to have best black suits of mourning out of them savings of mine. There goes my bag."

"Dear! Dear! Dear!" said Moses. "Here, take my little purse, and put it along of yours and shut up the whole concern. I don't half like the lantern, it might betray us."

"We've done with the light," answered Hart. He was about to extinguish the flame, when something occurred to Moses.

"Stay," said he, snatching the lantern away.

"Fair all round, says I. I opened my purse and showed you my gold, you show me what is in your bag."

"I can't; you saw it was sealed."

"But my purse was not sealed."

"So much the worse for you. I ain't answerable for your folly."

"Fair all round," said Moses. "Why are you to put in a sealed bag and me one as is not? I insist on it—break the seal.

"I won't do it."

"You shall, or I shall withdraw my purse."

Philip Hart stood considering.

Presently he said, churlishly, "If it's only a matter of sealing I'll wait here, and

you run home and get some wax and seal your purse up like mine."

"I ain't got no wax, and if I had I ain't got no seal."

"Oh, the end o' your thumb will do for that."

"I do not care for you to remain here with the lantern so as to let folk see what we're about."

"I'll blow the light out."

"No; there is a better way than that. You break the seal on your bag. That goes towards squaring us."

"If that is all, well. I'd do it to oblige you. But it ain't fair after I took all them precautions."

"What security is there in a seal? If thieves came here and broke the monument would they not also break the seal.

"Well," said Philip, sullenly, "if its only a matter o' breaking the seal, I'll do that."

He knelt down, thrust his hands into the cavity and destroyed the seal.

"That won't do," said Moses. "Let me see that the seal is broken."

"There you are, then," retorted Philip, drawing forth the little sack.

"Let me touch it."

"Oh, touch it if you will."

Moses took it up and weighed it. The bag was heavy. It contained metal. He shook it.

"It don't jingle like sovereigns," said he.

"No, cos I wrapped 'em up in paper," replied Hart, thrusting forth his arm to receive the sack.

"Stay awhile," said Moses. "All fair I counted all my money, and you count out yours. Then each knows what he is responsible for to the other. It would not do for you to die and me to come here to find a mine o' gold on which to support your widow and children and find only—only," he had slit the bag, and out poured only pieces of lead. "Ah, Philip, only lead."

Philip stood motionless

"After all," said Moses, "I've changed my mind again. I've thought of a still

better bank. I've had a letter to-day from the China Clay works at Penhill, and they'll take me on there at a good wage. So I'll just ask Margaret Westaway to be my banker and wife all at once. Thank you kindly for all the trouble you've taken, Philip."

Hart put his hand to the crowbar, his eyes glared.

"No, you won't," said Moses, and set his foot on the bar. "You may keep your hands to yourself. I won't give you the chance of being swung for me, and so letting your poor widow and children suffer without even a decent suit of mourning out of your leaden savings."

ARCHELAUS GOALAN

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Archelaus was one of the most daring and successful of the smugglers at the coast where Dorset and Devon meet. The coast there lends itself to the sort of enterprise which attracted the most adventurous spirits at the end of last century and the beginning of the present. The cliffs are steep, are riddled with caves, and firm little coves that invite small boats to enter with run goods

Archelaus was not only well known to the youth of the countryside as an ideal hero, whose achievements verged on the mythical and proved an incentive to imagination, but he was also known to all the preventive men of the coast—by name to some, personally to all by repute—but never had he as yet been caught.

There was not a trick of the trade with which he was not familiar; not an inch of the coast that he was not acquainted with; it was the firm belief of every one that there was not a man, and certainly not a woman, except such as were in Government pay, who would not do everything possible to screen him, and, indeed, it was to their

interest to do so, for the spirits which would cost a farmer six pounds if bought from a legitimate dealer he could obtain from a smuggler for three; so the labourer got his tobacco, and his wife her tea, at less than half cost at a shop, if he dealt with the free trader.

The Customs officers were well aware that Archelaus was a dangerous man to deal with, and that he would not scruple to take the life of any man who attempted to arrest him. However, so far no chance of taking him had occurred, to their vast annoyance.

The business of the free traders was carried on with Roscoff in Brittany and,

with Cherbourg, that is to say — from the Isle of Wight to Land's End—and Guernsey and Jersey also served as convenient depôts. The smugglers would cross the Channel in quite small boats, merely kegs, and in the wildest weather. Indeed, they preferred a bit of a breeze or a fog to a calm sea and a clear night, as it enabled them to run into harbour with better chance of escaping observation.

One blustering night Archelaus and a boy crossed in a boat with a single sail, drawing with them a chain of "tubs" full of brandy. The weather was so bad and the sea ran so high that they had the utmost difficulty in coming into harbour,and then

did not reach the cove intended, but, to save the vessel, the cargo, and themselves, were forced to make for and anchor in a little bay called Millcombe Harbour. This cove took its designation from a valley, at the bottom of which ran a small stream that reached the sea after traversing a pond or reservoir which set à flour mill in action. The stream itself was inadequate; but the tide rose high in this bay and filled the pond, and then the outflow, combined with the little rill, set the wheel in motion, and the mill ground corn as long as the supply of water lasted.

Now, as the tide changes daily, the work of the miller was irregular. He had to grind

when the tide was out, and to sleep or enjoy his leisure when the tide was in. At one time he was busy during the night, at another during the day.

The miller of Millcombe was named Merriman. He was of much the same age as Archelaus Goalan, but a very different sort of man, reserved, gloomy, and bad tempered, whereas the smuggler was frank and somewhat disposed to boisterous mirth. And yet there was a point in common—each was a man of indomitable resolution.

Merriman and Goalan had been in love with the same girl—perhaps the former was deeper in than the latter; but Patience West had preferred Archelaus, and when

she changed her name, changed it for Goalan. The miller after this became more gloomy, reserved and ill-tempered

Weary to death with their struggle with the sea, Archelaus and the boy, having secured their boat and detached and sunk the "tubs" crept up to the mill, where a light was burning, and finding the door of the mill open, crept in and flung themselves among the sacks of corn, glad to be under cover and in a place that was dry and warm. No one was in the mill itself of whom to ask permission.

An hour later Merriman came in. The tide was falling, and he had work to do. He brought a lantern with him, and as he

went among the sacks, was startled to see the bodies of two men. He held the light to them, and speedily discovered who they were—his successful rival, Archelaus, and his boy both wet, weary, and asleep.

He hastily withdrew the lantern, lest he should rouse them, and, leaving the mill, crept down to the water's edge and looked for the boat. She was there, and the man immediately understood the condition of affairs. The Government offered twenty shillings a head to all informers who enabled the preventive men to effect captures. But it was not the bait of two pounds which induced the miller to betray Goalan, it was the satisfaction of being able to revenge him-

self on the man who had robbed him of the woman he had loved.

Instead of returning to the mill and opening the sluice to allow of the wheel being put in motion, Merriman marched off to the preventive station and laid information there before the lieutenant in command. A party was at once despatched to the mill, and Archelaus and the lad were rudely roused from sleep by the voices and lights of the officers.

Some minutes ensued, so sleep drunk was the smuggler—before he could understand that he was arrested, and before he could see who surrounded him, But when he saw the face of the miller looking at him

over the shoulder of the officers with an expression of malignant satisfaction in it, then he knew that he had been betrayed, as also by whom he had been betrayed,

Goalan had three years imprisonment for this, and his boat was confiscated, together with the entire run. If he had had any doubts as to who had given him up, such doubts disappeared at the trial, when Merriman gave evidence against him and acknowledged that he had given information against the worn out, sleeping man who had taken refuge under his roof.

Then Archelaus, in court, shook his fist at Merriman, and before he could be stopped swore to be revenged on him so

soon as he obtained his release. Moreover all the while he was in prison, separated from his wife, unable to do anything for her maintenance, his heart glowed with rage and resentment against the man who had given him up; and often the last words on his lips as he fell asleep were. "By heaven! Let me have my liberty, and I'll do for him.

During these three years of confinement of Archelaus his enemy remained at the mill; but matters did not go smoothly with him. His breach of hospitality against the weary man who had crept to his mill for shelter had roused the indignation of all who heard of it; and the farmers round

marked their indignation by sending their corn to be ground by the millers of adjoining parishes; and the smaller people, the artisans and labourers, no longer bought meal and flour of him. His business declined. He knew that he had incurred the dislike of his neighbours, and saw no means of recovering their favour. Rum, spirits, tobacco, and tea were neither so cheap nor so abundant for miles round now that the ringleader of the free-traders was "in quad." In his solitude and dissatisfaction Merriman sought comfort in drink. He had no friend but the bottle, and that was not a friend who would reproach him, but would still the gnawings of his conscience, that re-

proached him, as well as public opinion, for what he had done.

When at length the term of Archelaus's sentence was at an end and the smuggler came home, it was to learn that the miller had caused his wife considerable annoyance by his visits during his absence and that she had been obliged to appeal to her brother to protect her against his impertinence.

This did not tend to sweeten the humour of Goalan, and he waited his opportunity when he might bring the miller to a reckoning for the wrongs he had done him.

It did not for a moment occur to Archelaus to look about for some other profession.

As a man who is once a poacher is ever a poacher, so was it with such as had embarked in smuggling—the life of adventure, the great profits made, combined to make it a career full of attraction to an adventurous man. Accordingly Goalan at once and without hesitation re-embarked in his venturous course.

One February night he was out. He had run a small cargo, and was acting as his own "tub-man"—that is to say, he was not only skipper of his boat, but he was conveying the goods during the night, assisted by the boy who had been his former mate now grown a young man, to one of the places of concealment constructed a

little way inland. Being without much means, the first ventures of Archelaus had to be on a small scale.

The wind blew hard and drove flakes of snow before it that speedily turned the red head of Archelaus into one that might have belonged to a patriarch. He carried a couple of kegs—one on his back, the other on his chest—slung over his shoulders by the ropes with which they were always provided by the French dealers. The run was a "forced" one; the boat was in a cove near to the station, but owing to the falling snow, Goalan could reckon on it not being observed, and on his passage to and fro being unhindered, till he had cleared his

cargo. As, laden with his tubs, he was pushing forward along a portion of the road that led to the village, his foot struck something lying across his path, and which he had not observed on a former journey to and fro. He thought at first it was a piece of wood or a sack.

"Aye, a sack!" said he. "This is the road to that cursed dog's mill. Would I could meet him on such a night as this face to face, and I'd chuck him over the cliffs without scruple!" Then he kicked the object with some force, whereat it uttered a groan.

Archelaus now knew that this was some living creature. He stooped and groped

with his hand in the snow, and found that he had stumbled on a man. The face and hands were ice-cold. Some one had fallen there, exhausted by the battle with the wind and snow, perhaps overcome by sickness.

Archelaus knelt down and endeavoured to ascertain who was there, and for this purpose he struck his flint and steel and succeeded in kindling a light. Thus he was able to examine the prostrate wretch. He recognised his enemy, and the reason why he lay thus was not to be mistaken, from the fumes of spirits that came from him. Merriman, in returning home half drunk from the tavern, had become wholly drunk by the exposure, to the cold.

Archelaus sprang to his feet. "I have you at last in my power!" he shouted; then he laid aside the kegs he had been carrying. "This is what I have long desired. Now we will have our quarrel out with one another."

But the prostrate man remained motionless.

"Ah!" said Archelaus grimly, "thus lay I, three years ago, and you had no mercy on me. Shall I now pity you? Come, stand up!"

With all his might Goalan lifted the man to a sitting posture and tired to force him to his feet. In vain, Merriman fell back again in the snow.

"By heavens! what shall I do? Shall I let him die in the cold? It is what he deserves."

He stood considering. There was his cargo of run goods. He required all the night in order to dispose of the kegs. The boy indeed, was on his way with some.

Suddenly a resolution became fixed in the mind of the smuggler; he left his "tubs" to take care of themselves, and kneeling, he heaved the miller upon his back, and set off, carrying him.

He toiled away for a mile, through wind and snow, till he reached the preventive station, the first human habitation he reached. There he knocked at the door, and when

it was opened marched in and cast his burden on the table.

"There," said he, "I have done my best; you attend to the fox, and bring him round. Don't say how he came here." Then he left the place and went back to where he had left his kegs.

It is a curious fact that the preventive men after that never caught Archelaus. He had narrow escapes; but even though he went by them within a stone's throw, carrying run goods, none of them ever saw him.

Archelaus died the other day at a great age. The miller died of drink forty years ago.

A DEAD MAN'S TEETH

A DEAD MAN'S TEETH

"Yes, sir, it is a grave, what you see there, and what is more I can tell you whose grave it is, or was. And a coorious sarcumstance is connected with that there grave, and if you don't mind sitting down on that piece of rock for five minutes, I'll tell you all about it."

I was examining for geological purposes a quarry in Cornwall that had been opened

in the side of a hill for the extraction of stone, wherewith to metal the roads. Whilst studying the strata, I observed a sort of nick in the uppermost layer of rock, under the earth which rose above the surface of the rock some three feet six inches or four feet.

The nick was about two-feet deep and the same breadth, and the sides were cut perpendicularly. It was clearly artificial, and at once struck me as being a section of a grave. There was no church-yard interfered with, so that I supposed the grave was prehistoric, and at once inquired whether any bronze or flint weapons had been found when it was cut through.

"No, sir," said the quarryman, "nothing

of the sort as far as I know; it was the head of the grave we cut through, and when we sent the pick into it, the gentleman's head came down into the quarry."

"Gentleman's head? What gentleman's head?"

"Well, sir, I did not know at the time. It gave me a lot of trouble did that head, or rather the teeth from it. If you'll be so good as to sit down on that stone, I'll tell you all about it, and I reckon it will be worth your trouble. It's a coorious story, as coorious a story as you have ever heard, I take it.

"I will listen certainly. But excuse me one moment. I should like to crawl up

the side of the quarry and examine the grave."

"It's my lunch time, and I've nothing to do but to eat and talk for half-an-hour," said the quarryman, "so I'll tell you all the whole story, when you've been up and come down again. There be bones there. You'll find his neck; we cut off the head of the grave. But whatever you do, leave the bones alone. Don't carry any away with you in your pocket, or you'll be just in a pretty way.

I made the exploration I required. I found that a grave had been cut in the rock. Clearly, when the interment took place, those who made the grave did not consider

that there was a sufficient depth of earth, and they had accordingly cut out a hole in the rock below the soil, to accommodate the dead man. Bones were still in situ. I could find no trace of coffin, but in all likelihood, if there had been one there, it had rotted away, and the gravelly soil from above had fallen in on all sides, and had taken the place of the wood as it decomposed. And if there had been a mound above the dead man, the sinking in after decomposition had caused it to disappear. There were bushes of heather above the grave, but nothing to indicate that a tomb had been in the place, as far as could be judged from above. Its presence would not have been

guessed had it not been revealed by the operations of the quarrymen.

Having completed my observations, I returned to the bottom, and seated myself on the stone indicated by the workman. He occupied the top of another, and was engaged on a pie—an appalling composition of heavy pastry, potato, and bacon, grey in colour as a Jerusalem artichoke, close in texture and heavy as a cannon ball. He cut large junks out of this terrible specimen of domestic cookery and thrust them between knife and thumb into his mouth. As he opened this receptacle I observed that the gums were ill-provided with teeth, so that mastication must be imperfect. It is really

extraordinary how the wives of working-men exhibit their ingenuity in proving "how not to do it." It is said that the way to a man's heart is through the stomach. Is it that the wives of our labourers are resolved to put the tenderness, the devotion of their men to the severest possible test, as cannon are run over a new bridge?

"You see sir." said the quarryman. "when we cut that new slice we went slap through the head of the grave, and never knowed there was a grave there, till down came the head, like a snowball. It was my partner James Doune, as was up there wi' his pick. Me was sitting here, and I'd just opened my bag for my dinner, when I heard

James a-hollerin' to me to look out. I did look up, and seed that there skull come jumping down the side, and before I could undo my legs—I'd knotted them for my lunch, and had the bag open on my lap—down came the skull and with one skip it flopped right among my victuals, and there it sat in my lap, looking up in my face, as innocent as a babe, so it seemed to me.

"Well, sir, I dare say you know, if you know anything—and you seem to be a learned gentleman—that there ain't a better preservative against toothache than to carry about a dead man's tooth in your pocket. Dead men's teeth don't lie about promiscuous as empty snail shells, and I'd often wished

to have one. I suffer terrible from my teeth. I've been kept raving with pain night after night, and one ain't up to work when one has been kept raving all night, either with teeth or babies. Me and the church sexton ain't the best of friends. You see, I'm a Bible Christian and spiritual, and that there sexton is of earth, earthy. I couldn't ask a favour of him, to accommodate me with a tooth if he haps to turn one up when digging a new grave. It is true we have got a cemetery of our own to the chapel, but it's new, and nothing is turned up there but earthworms. As this was the case I was uncommon joyful when that head came bouncing into my lap. I found the teeth

weren't particular tight in, and with my knife I easily got a tooth or two out; I thought I'd be square all round, so I got out a back tooth—they call 'em molars up to the Board School—and an eye tooth and a front one. Then I thought I was pretty well set up and protected against toothache. I got my wife to sew 'em up in a bit o'silk and hung it round my neck. I may say this—from that day so long as I wore the dead man's teeth I never had a touch of the toothache."

"And how long did you wear them!"

"Three days, sir."

"Not more? Why did you not retain them?"

"I'll tell you why, if you'll listen to me."

"Certainly. But what have you done with the skull?"

"Chucked it away. It weren't no good to nobody—least of all to the owner. And for me—I'd got out of it all I wanted."

"You have not the teeth now?"

"No. I kept them for three days and then chucked them away."

"Have you had toothache since?"

"Terrible; but I had what was wusser when I had the teeth."

"Well go on and tell me what the 'wusser' was."

"So I will, if you'll listen to me. Well,

sir, I had them teeth done up in a bit of silk, and hung round my throat. The first night I went to bed, that was Saturday, I had the little bag round my neck. I hadn't laid my head on the pillow before—but, I must tell you, I'm a Bible Christian and a serious man. I'm a local, I am, and I preach in our chapel, and am generally reckoned a rousin' sort of a preacher. For, sir, I knows how to work 'em up. Well, when you understand that, you will understand how astonished I was when I laid my head on the pillow, to find I wasn't no more what I ought to have been. In the first place, I had'nt gone to bed in my clothes, and no sooner was my head on my pillow than I

was in a red coat and breeches and gaiters; and what is more, in the second place, I'd laid me down to rest, and I found myself astride on a saddle, on horseback, tearin' over the country, jumping hedges, tally-hoin' —me as never rode a hoss in my life, and never tally-hoed, and wouldn't do it to save my soul. I knowed all the while I was doing wrong. I knowed I'd got to preach in our chapel next evening, the Sabbath Day—and here was I in a red coat, and galloping after the hounds, and tearin' after a fox, and swearing orful! I couldn't help myself. I believe my face was as pink as my coat. I tried to compose my mouth to say Hallelujah, but I couldn't do it—I rapped out a

—but, sir, I dussn't even whisper what I then swore at the top o' my voice; and I had to preach at a revival within some few hours. It was terrible—terrible!"

I saw the quarryman's face bathed in perspiration. The thought of what he had gone through affected him, and his hand shook as he heaved a lump of pastry to his quivering lips.

"I tried to think I was in the pulpit; you must understand, sir, if at a right moment you bang the cushion and kick the panels—it'll bring down sinners like over ripe green-gages, But it was no good; I was whacking into my cob, and kicking with spurs into her flanks, and away she went over a five-barred

gate—it was terrible—terrible, to a shining light, sir,—such as I be."

The man heaved a sigh and wiped his brow and cheeks, and rose with his pudding-bag.

"All the Sabbath Day after that," continued the quarryman, "I wasn't myself. It lay on my conscience that I'd done wrong; and when I preached in the evening, there was no unction in me, no more, sir, than you could have greased the fly-wheel of your watch with; and usually there's quite a pomatum-pot-ful. I didn't feel happy, and it was with a heavy heart and a troubled head that I went to bed on the Sabbath night." He heaved another sigh, and folded up his lunch-bag.

"Will you believe it, sir? No sooner had I closed my eyes than I was in a public-house. I—I—who've been a Band of Hope ever since I was a baby. I've heard say I never took to the bottle even in earliest infancy, though it was but a bottle of milk, so ingrained in me be temperance principles. I've heard mother say she put a bit of sopped bread into a rag, and let me have that when a baby—so stubborn was I, and so furious did I kick out with my little legs when shown the bottle. It was the name, I reckon, set me against it. However, sir, there I was, just out of the pulpit at Bethesda, and in the 'Fox and Hounds' drinking. I tried to call out for Gingerade, but the words got

altered in my throat to Whisky Toddy. And what was more, I was singing—roaring out at the top of my voice—

"Come, my lads, let us be jolly,
Drive away dull melancholly;
For to grieve it is a folly
When we meet together!"

The quarryman covered his eyes with his hands—he was ashamed to look up.

"If that wasn't bad enough, the words that followed were worse—and I a teetotaller down to the ground,

Here's the bottle, as it passes
Do not fail to fill your glasses;
Water drinkers are dull asses
When they're met together.

Milk is meet for infancy
Ladies like to sip Bohea;
Not such stuff for you and me
When we're met together.

"All the while I sang it I knew I was

saying good-bye to my consistency, I was going against my dearest convictions. But I couldn't help myself, it was as though an evil spirit possessed me. I was myself and yet not myself. It was terrible—terrible —terrible!"

The quarryman swung his pasty bag, and smote his breast with it.

"That wasn't all," he continued, "and lowered his tone. "There was an uncommon pretty barmaid with red rosy cheeks and curling black hair; and somehow I got my arm round her waist. I knowed my wife was looking on, and, sir, I knowed the consequences would be orful—orful—simply orful."

The quarryman's head sank on his knees, he clasped his hands over the back of his head, and groaned for full five minutes. Presently he looked up, pulled himself together, and continued his narrative.

"The worst of all is behind. I was very busy on Monday, as I was on Mr. Conybeare's committee. We were in for the election, and I'm tremendous strong as a Liberal and for Home Rule, and I reckon I can influence a good many votes in my district of Cornwall. Well, sir, I'd been about canvassing for Mr. Conybeare very hard, yet all the while I had a sort of deadly fear at my heart that what I'd been doing, both hunting and drinking, and swearing and singing,

would come out in public, or would be thrown in my teeth by the Conservatives, and might damage the good cause. But no one said anything about it on Monday, and towards evening my mind was more at ease.

"I was very tired when I went to bed, for I had been working, as I said, very hard indeed, and persuading of obstinate politicians is worse than breaking stones for the road, and far worse than converting of obstinate sinners. No sooner had I laid my head on the pillow than—will you believe it, sir?—I was in the full swing of the election. I didn't know it was coming on so fast. I thought it would be three weeks, but not a bit of it.

They'd set up a polling place in the Board school, and there was I swaggering up to register my vote. There were placards—Unionist on one side, but I wouldn't look at them; on the other side were the Radical posters—from Mr. Conybeare— and I knowed my own mind. If any man in England be true and loyal to the G.O.M. that's me. Well, sir, in I walked and gave my name, I knowed my number, and went as confident as possible into the little box of unplaned deal boards, and with my paper in one hand took the pencil in the other, wetted the pencil with my tongue to make sure it marked black enough, and then set down my cross. Will you believe it?—that sperit

o' perversity and devilry had come over me once more, and I'd gone and voted conservative."

The quarryman staggered back, and I had just time to spring to his aid. He had fainted. I held him in my arms till he came round. I threw water over his face, and by degrees he was himself again.

"Orful! orful! wasn't it?" said he. "Well, sir, after that I would have nothing more to do with them teeth. They did it. I chucked 'em away; toothache would be better all night long than the trials I had to undergo when I had them dead man's teeth about me."

"But have you not dreamed since?" I

asked," looking at the pasty which, when he fainted, I had taken in my hand.

"Yes, sir, often, very often; bnt then my dreams since have always been Nonconformist, Temperance and Radical dreams—and them's wholesome."

"You said something about knowing who it was whose grave you had disturbed?"

"Well, and so I believe I do. I did not know at the time, but afterwards, when I began to tell my story; then there was a talk about it and a raking and a grubbing among old folk's memories, and there was an old woman who said she could throw some light on the subject. Her tale was that about a hundred years ago, or more

perhaps, she could not be sure, there lived at the Old Hall one Squire Trewenna. The Hall has been pulled down because of the mines, and the Trewennas are all gone. Squire Trewenna was a terrible man for hunting and drinking, and was, moreover, a regular rory tory Conservative. He was a fast chap, and no good to nobody but to dogs and horses, and before he died he begged that he might be buried on the brink of the moor where he'd ridden so often and enjoyed himself so much, and had killed a tremendous big fox in the last hunt he ever went out in before gout got to his stomick. And he said he wanted no headstone over him, that fox and hounds and horses might go

over his grave. Well, folks forgot, as there was no head stone, where he lay, exact, and old Betty Tregellas says she believes what we cut into was Squire Trewenna's grave. I think so too, for how else was it that when I had those teeth about me I was so possessd wi' a spirit of unrighteousness and drinking and Conservatism? I reckon you've had a Board School education and been to the University, and are a learned man. Tell me, now, am I not right?"

CHERRY

CHERRY

The little harbour of Fowey is a mere creek between high hills and rocks, and it winds like a letter S. It is safe enough anchorage in every gale except one which blows into the very mouth of the harbour. When that is the case, and a high tide accompanies the gale, then the water is heaped up and rolled back inundating the town, and surging over the banks destroy-

ing gardens and carrying away outbuildings which are usually regarded as beyond the reach of salt water.

Such an event is quite exceptional, and occurs hardly once in a lifetime. Nevertheless, it does occur sometimes, and just as on Vesuvius the peasants disregard former experiences and go on cultivating and building as though no fresh outbreak of the volcano was likely to happen, so in Fowey inlet the natives till gardens and build pigstyes as though in their lifetime there was not likely to be a concurrence of of a gale from the south with the spring tide. Just such a storm took place in the year 1824, when the tide was at it height,

and then a vast amount of devastation was wrought in Fowey. But as that is an ill wind which blows nobody any good, so was it in this case ; the gale which wrecked ships, which destroyed gardens, which swamped cellars and spoiled goods, which washed down cattle sheds and swept the cattle away, did some good to somebody, and that body was Cherry—that is to say if the matrimonial harbour be one in which it is good to ride.

How this happened you shall hear.

But first of all you must hear who Cherry was. There is a little point or spit of land, or rather of rock, that runs into the harbour between Fowey town and the entrance to

the creek, commanded by old castles.

On this spit of rock, at the beginning of the century, lived an old woman, Betty Chenoweth, and her daughter Cherry. Betty was a widow. Her husband had been lost in a fishing boat, and she had been left to struggle with adversity, and had been prematurely aged by the stress of the struggle. She picked up a living by baking. On this prong of rock Betty had set up an oven and she not only baked bread but also pies and pasties and fruits for the grocer and the artisans.

Cherry her daughter, wandered over the downs and reaped gorse and thorns, and any waste brush that would make a

quick fire wherewith to supply her mother's "cloam," i.e., earthenware oven.

The oven was small, the supply of fuel limited to what Cherry was able to carry home daily on her back, consequently the income derived by Betty Chenoweth from her bakehouse was small, so small that it just sufficed to maintain her and Cherry, but not to enable them to lay by. They eked out their substance by means of two pigs, kept in a stye a little beyond the bakehouse, so that the waft of the stye was carried up or down the creek according as the current of the air drew in or blew out the bakehouse itself was sweet enough. The life was a hard one, and Cherry had to

extend her excursions daily further afield after she had cut away and brought home all the thorns, brambles, and furze near home. The active life kept her in rude health, and gave a ripeness and colour to her cheeks that did not make her name a misnomer.

On one and another occasion she had come across a young coastguardsman, named Philip Maxwell. He was not a Cornishman, he came from up country, and consequently was not much esteemed by the natives, who are peculiarly averse to strangers. Added to which he was in that service which is specially odious to a Cornishman, who has the blood of smugglers in his arteries.

But nothing had passed between them further than an offer on the part of the young man to assist Cherry with her burden, which was promptly rejected with a "Now doan 'ee be a fule. You knows well enough that a horficer like you can't carry a drashy lot o' fuzz about as a maid. You be paid to do northing, you is, so get along."

On one occasion Cherry mentioned to her mother that Philip Maxwell had been civil to her, but that she had kept him at a distance because he was a "furriner."

"Well, Cherry," the old woman replied. "Pore thing, it's his misfortun', and not his fault. Us mustn't be down too hard on 'im for that. My father's great-aunt by marriage

were a Darset woman, but I always heard, for all that, her died happy. How aboot the pig us be goin' to kill, Cherry? Be her a layin' on o' fat?"

"Only middlin', mother."

"Then us must give a bag o' barley meal to her ribs, and that's cruel expensive."

So matters stood—Philip making no further advances—the pig putting on fat slowly, the baking business bringing in a few pence daily, and Cherry going ever further afield for fuel—when the great storm of 1824 occurred. The storm had been threatening all day. It burst into fury at nightfall. The wind blew directly in at the harbour mouth, and heaped the water up in

the contracted throat; it flung in billow on billow, and as darkness deepened the tide began to flow and to aggravate the gravity of the situation. Betty and her daughter had prepared to go to bed, but hesitated to retreat under the blanket with the prospect before them of a wild night, and with hearing the waves cast their spray against the window. The hut was all on one floor, the little bedroom, or lean-to, against the chamber that served as parlour, shop, bakehouse, and all during the day.

"Oh my! mother. I'm sure we're done for!" gasped Cherry, as a swash of water swept over the window.

"Stand your ground, Cherry, stand your

ground!" answered the old woman; "wasn't it a whole packet o' troubles poured over my head when your pore father died, and I were left wi' you and only a crooked sixpence in my pocket—and some 'taters in the garding. But I put a good heart on it, and stood my ground—I did."

"Hark there!" cried the girl, as a billow thundered upon the rock, and shook the little house to its foundations. The two women, half undressed, sat in doubt and fear.

"Us can't put out the can'l," said Betty, "and Cherry, 'tis an expense—a gashly one burnin' one all night long."

The wind moaned about the little building, that was not too substantially built.

"Don't-y think, mother, us'd be safest if us cra'led into the oven?" asked the girl.

"I reckon 'twould make roast meat o' us, Cherry; I've been bakin' to-day, and the heat's not gone out of it."

"That's true," said the girl, "I forgot; but—oh, mither!" A great wave clashed against the rock, struck the walls of the house, surged over the roof, and water came down the chimney, hissing on and extinguishing the embers on the hearth.

"Oh, mither! mither! I'm sure we're done for!"

"Stand your ground, Cherry, stand your ground," said the old woman. "But I'll just draw on my jacket."

"I reckon I'll do the same," said her daughter.

"Oh, mither! mither! The tide and the storm must be jumpin' together," she remarked, after a pause, and another thud of wave and deluge sweeping the house.

Then with a sudden cry—"Mither! them pigs! What will them blessed hanimals do?"

"We mun try and save 'em," said Betty.

"Mither, you bide here. 'Taint no good both on us runnin' into peril. I'll go out."

"Then keep along to leeward, Cherry," advised Betty.

Cautiously the girl stole out at the door. She had lighted a lantern, and this she

swung in her hand. After opening the door she stood in it a moment, gasping for breath, and bracing herself against the wind, that almost threw her down. She fastened the door behind her when she had got through, and crept round the house on the side away from the sea. She clung to the wall as she stepped along.

The water was high as she had never seen it before, swishing round the point, and covering the neck of rock connecting the house with the mainland. Wave after wave plunged across this neck, making it impossible for the girl and her mother to take refuge on shore should they desire to do so.

It was quite uncertain whether the frail

wooden hut of old wreck timber would stand if many more and any mightier waves were hurled against it.

As Cherry stepped along, a great mass of water that was flung over the roof dislodged a slate, and sent it flying down, happily carried by the impetus beyond the girl.

Having reached the seaward end of the dwelling she paused, watching her opportunity; the stye was not many paces off, but between her and it was a chasm, through which wind and water raced, the wind in one continuous blast, the water in intermittent bursts.

The little low window of the cottage

looked eastward out upon the pigstye; the light of the candle within illumined the spray as it drifted by.

"Now for it!" said Cherry, and she made a rush.

The pigs were squealing. They were in as great terror of their lives as were the two women, and, of course, were devoid of the moral internal force to sustain them under their fear of death.

"If we lose them two pigs," said Cherry, "we may just as well give up. Us'll have no bacon all the winter."

Two, three, five minutes elapsed.

The old woman within listened and prayed, when suddenly a crash like a thun-

derclap, a huge roller had come against the house, beaten in the window, but in with it, through the broken frame, borne by the velocity of the wave, came Cherry, holding one of the pigs, with both arms thrown round it. Some minutes elapsed before Cherry recovered herself so as to speak. She staggered to her feet, but without relinquishing hold of the pig.

"Oh, mither, mither! sure it's the end o' the world, and us shall be drownded!"

"Stand your ground, Cherry; stand your ground," answered her mother. "And don'ty know Scriptur better nor that? The world'll not be drownded, but burnt. Where be t'other pig, too?"

"Her's gone out to say," answered the girl, dolorously. "I did my best; I saved one. I couldn't hold them both in that drashy wave."

"Us mun be thankful for what us have," said the mother. "Which be it, Cherry? Her as wor fattenin,' and had the sack o' barley meal?"

"Yes, mither, I held fast to she."

"Glory ralleluley!" exclaimed Betty. "Glad the barley meal ain't gone out to say."

The waves now began to pour in at the broken windows. The light had been extinguished when Cherry and the pig on the back of the billow had come tumbling

in through the casement. So every wave flooded the little house.

"Cherry," said old Betty, "give me the pig. Her'll get cramp in the legs, and lose her appertite, and won't take heart to no more victuals if her bides down there. Thee cra'l on to the table and take the pig wi' me and sit high an dry."

With some difficulty the pig was heaved up on the table, and the old woman scrambled out of the water, and seated herself with one arm round the sow.

"Get up yourself, Cherry," said she, "get up on t'other side, and we'll hold her quiet, for a time! How her poor heart be beaten' to be sure. Her can't ha' laid on

such a terrible amount o' fat, Cherry, or I couldn't feel her dear heart beat as I do.

Cherry now ascended the table, and the two women sat on it with the fat pig between them.

They had not been in this situation long before they heard a shout, then a blow at the door, which burst open, and in dashed a man.

"I say, Cherry!"

The voice was that of Philip Maxwell.

"Here I bes, Philip," reponded the girl, "a settin' on the table along wi our ol' pig and mither."

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed the young coastguard. "I feared you might be swept

away. Now, come. I will carry you one by one to shore."

"What, the pig."

"I don't know about the pig."

"Us can't spare the pig, Philip. He is terrible comfortable settin' on the table along of mither and me. Us must be kearful and tender of him, as us have to eat 'un this winter, and there's the bag o' barley meal inside 'un."

"I'm not so sure that it is possible to get back," said the young man at the door. "With you I will make the venture—hardly with the pig."

"No thank'ee, I'll not go wi'out mither," answered the girl readily.

Another wave plunged through the window and swirled in through the door.

"Get up on the table, young chap," said Betty.

"Come and sit by me."

Philip hesitated.

"Or by the pig, and hold it tight. You can feel her heart beat like mither's."

He still hesitated.

"Or by Cherry—it's all one, I reckon."

Then the coastguardsman did ascend the table, out of the water, which reached above his knees; and he did seat himself thereon, not by the pig, nor by old Betty.

"You must hold on," said the old woman. "Them great bolstrin' waves lift the table,

and may swim up out through the winder, and carry us all to say, just like Noah and his ark—and then there's all that barley meal wasted."

"I am holding on," said Philip.

"And do'y feel how her heart beats?" asked Betty.

"I think I do," answered Maxwell, but his arm was not round the pig, nor his hand on her heart. The wind whistled and then howled, the waves boomed and hissed. Betty thought that she could hear broken words and whispers passing on the further side of the pig, but she paid no great attention to them.

Presently Cherry put her face across the

back of the fat sow, and said to her mother: "Mither! mither dear! He's gone and axed me to be his awne."

"Stand your ground, Cherry, stand your ground; don't'y be too frolicksome, and yield all to wance."

Then ensued a little more whispering, interrupted by booming of waves, wailing of winds, and grunting of the pig.

Then again the girl's head was turned to her mother across the back of the pig.

"Oh mither! mither! Do'y now tell me what I'm to answer and say. He's terrible pressin', he be."

"Stand your ground, Cherry, stand your ground," responded the old woman.

"There's the winder, all broked and scat abroad. It'll cost pounds to put'n to right Will he do that for the sake o' you?"

A little low whispering; then—"Yes mither; he'll put in a new casement."

"Don't give way to wance, Cherry. There's the pigstye—I reckon all washed away. Do'y think he valleys you sufficient to build a new pigstye?"

After a brief conference, Cherry said. "Yes, mither, he'll make up a new pig's house."

"That's brave," remarked Betty. "Then maiden, as us have lost one pig—I reckon us'll take'n."

So taken Philip was.

STEALING A POLICEMAN

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The county of Rutland, is the smallest in England: it is but eighteen miles long, and its extreme breadth is fifteen. The consequence of this contracted area is that whatever happens in one corner of the county is noised over every part of it, and that the affairs of every person in the county are intimately known to each other.

In one of the fifty parishes, which shall

not be named, because to name it is unessential, lived a youth called Joseph Samuel Wardley. He was the son of a blacksmith, was an able-bodied, fine-looking fellow, broad shouldered, broad breasted, and with light red hair, and eyes that seemed to have fallen into the copper when his mother was washing, and to have had the colour boiled out of them, so pale were they.

Joseph Samuel Wardley was—if virtue consists in a series of negatives—a most exemplary character. He didn't swear, he didn't drink, he didn't squabble with his fellow-men, he didn't get into scrapes with the girls. If, however, virtue consists of

positives, then it would be hard to say that Joseph Samuel Wardley was distinguished for his virtue; for, as a matter of fact, it would be hard to say what Joseph Samuel Wardley did that was good. He was slow in his movements, slow in taking in ideas, slower in making use of them when he had received them into his brain. He had worked with his father at the forge, but his father feared that he would never make a blacksmith, as he tired the horses out and made them restive before he had shod all their four feet. Then Joseph Samuel was sent to work on a farm, but he was so slow at the plough that the farmers would not retain him in their service. It was said

that Joseph Samuel was always asleep. This was not exactly true. Joseph Samuel was so drowsy and indolent over his work by day, that he was never sufficiently exhausted by his efforts to enjoy a sound sleep at night. He was half asleep by day, he was half awake by night. There is nothing so conducive to all-forgetting sleep as the exercise of the full energies by day. Joseph Samuel did not put forth even one half of his energies by day. The other half remained to disturb the tranquillity of the night, consequently he was a light sleeper; and sometimes it was as doubtful whether he were asleep at night, as it was doubtful whether he were awake by day

As he was dismissed from the plough-tail, he returned to his father, who employed him to work the bellows which kept his fire going in the forge. "But," as the farrier said, "a chap can't go on all his life blowing bellows. I must find some profession or trade for which he is suited."

Accident or Fate seemed to give the requisite indication. The father of Joseph Samuel had been an industrious man all his life, and it was believed that he had amassed money. He had no dealings with the bank at Oakham, that was well known. Where then did he keep his money? It was whispered that, singularly enough, whenever he had received payment of a heavy bill,

Mr. Wardley was observed to mount a ladder to put straight, as he said, one of the tiles in his roof that was out of place and let the water through. That the coincidence was noticed, and was a matter of discussion, never occurred to the blacksmith. The last time he brought in his bill to the Squire it was for a sum of five and twenty pounds and some odd shillings. No sooner had he received the money, than it was remarked a tile was again loose in the roof.

One night that Joseph Samuel lay awake, unable by any means to induce sleep, such as by counting sheep going through a gap in the hedge, repeating his catechism, listening to the snores of his parents in an

adjoining room, he thought he heard a sound on the tiles, as if someone was engaged repairing the roof. He got out of bed, peered through the window, and saw by the light of a crescent moon, that a ladder was set against the house, and that a pair of legs were visible on the ladder.

As Joseph Samuel was inclined for activity all night, and prompt in his resolution, which was not the case by day, he stole downstairs on tiptoe, and opened the back door softly. He was in his night shirt. That did not matter. The air was cool but not frosty, and no rain was falling. He was at the back of the house, the opposite side to that at which the ladder was set up,

and where he had observed the legs. He knew where his father kept a ladder. He went barefooted to the spot, removed the ladder planted it at the back of the house, climbed up it without making the smallest noise, and succeeded in making his way cautiously up the tiles till he reached the ridge of his father's roof. Holding to the ridge tiles he heaved himself up by both hands breast high above the ridge piece.

Then he saw what was being done on the further side.

Two men were there; one on a ladder holding another by the ankles, who had scrambled on to the roof and was lifting tile after tile and feeling under each, obviously

expecting to find and carry off the farrier's store of savings.

Joseph Samuel Wardley did not hesitate for a moment what to do. With perfect presence of mind, and great energy as well as well as courage, he said, "Bo!"

The robbers were staggered. They looked up, saw a semi-white figure rising above the roof, glowering at them. Their nerve gave way. He who was on the ladder let go the ankles of the man on the roof, the latter slid down, and fell on the man with his feet on the ladder rungs, and both were precipitated to the bottom.

Joseph Samuel now aroused the house, and the burglars were arrested. One had

dislocated his lip, the other had congestion of the brain as his head had fallen on a brick. Had the brick been a little harder, it is believed it would have broken his head; as it was, the burglar's head broke the brick —split it into three pieces.

The two men were delivered over to the police and were brought before the magistrates at the Petty Sessions, who consigned them to be tried at the Quarter Sessions for attempted burglary.

When the trial came on, the plea put in for the two men was that they had been bird-nesting, and evidence was produced that they had been seen going up trees.

Nothing had been taken. The house

had not been broken into, so that some difficulty was entertained as to the nature of the offence, and the amount of punishment to be awarded them if found guilty. Finally, they were found guilty of an attempt at bird-nesting with felonious intent and were ordered nine month's imprisonment with hard labour.

This incident determined the mind of the blacksmith as to proper avocation for his son. Joseph Samuel must become a policeman. A "bobby" has to be about at night, and that was precisely what Joseph was calculated for, as he could not sleep at night.

He was so able-bodied, such a fine figure

of a man, that he was at once accepted and put in the force, assumed the not unpicturesque uniform of a county policeman, and believed that he had found his true occupation.

He was finally planted at a place on the opposite side of the little county. Of course, the fame of his exploit had preceded him; he was looked up to as a man of the greatest ability, energy, and resolution, and it was concluded that with him in the parish everything was safe. It was conjectured, rather than known, that the fear of Joseph Samuel had fallen on all the miscreants in the county of Rutland. It was high time that men of a superior order of intelligence

should be engaged in the force, for a number of robberies had been committed of late on the graziers of Rutlandshire. The low land, readily overflowed, serves for the rearing of young cattle till they are fit to kill, when they are sent in great numbers to the London market. There had been thefts of carcases of calves and young bullocks, sometimes the live beasts had been carried off, rapidly despatched and dismissed to London before the day broke. Some graziers had lost severely. It was not possible to say where the next robbery would take place, consequently all were equally anxious and uneasy.

A small farmer was one evening on his

way to the nearest town. He had the carcase of a young bullock to dispose of. His ground was overflowed and as he could no longer feed his bullock he killed it and was taking the carcase to town, when passing through Bashentine, the village at which Joseph Samuel was quartered, he disposed of it to the village butcher, who at once removed the dead meat, and paid the man for it. The farmer had something to do in the town besides selling the carcase, so he proceeded on his way, but drew up at a little tavern beside the road where he was fond of having his glass. He unharnessed his horse, ran the light cart under cover, and entered the public-house. The man

was addicted to drink, he had money in his pocket, he met there with some chums, and the end was that he resolved to make a night of it there.

A spirit of perversity rules the destinies of men. As long as Joseph Samuel was obliged to be awake by day, he could not sleep at night, but now that he was a policeman and had to make his excursions by night, he felt sleepy when the dark set in, and some nights was hardly able to keep his eyes open. It was so on this evening. He was coming along the road, beside which stood the public-house into which the farmer had gone. He was so weary, so heavy in his eyes, that he resolved on having just a

wink of sleep to freshen him before he proceeded on his beat. Accordingly he entered the shed attached to the tavern, and finding a light cart, crept into it, stretched himself on the straw in the bottom, and in a moment was fast asleep. He slept so soundly that he did not stir, did not snore.

Not a quarter-of-an-hour had elapsed before two men stole into the cart-shed. One had a slight limp. The other had a lump at the back of his head.

"You're sure of it?" asked the latter of these men.

"Certain. He killed his bullock this morning. He's drinking in the house,"

"Shall we get out his cob, harness it, and

drive away with cart and carcase ? ' '

" The stable door is locked, I think we'd best draw the cart ourselves. It's light, and we shall get to the station by day break."

The two men drew the cart forth.

" It's heavy," said the limping man.

" It's the bullock ; it's a prime beast, I can tell you."

The two fellows drew the cart into the road, put themselves in the shafts and started, running as hard as they could, drawing the cart along with them. The night was dark, the movement was conducive to sleep, and Joseph Samuel slept on peacefully, and dreamed of home.

A little after midnight—"I say, Tummas," said the shaft-horse, "I'm tremendous hungry. What do you say—shall we halt, cut a slice out of the carcase and have a cutlet each?"

"I wouldn't risk it," said the leader. "The fire might betray us; we couldn't eat raw cutlet, we ain't savages."

"Well cut along Tummas."

And away cantered the thieves with the cart and carcase. Towards dawn they neared the station.

Both were becoming fatigued.

"I say, Tummas," said the shaft-horse, "I'm so rampageous hungry I could eat the whole bullock."

"And I'm so thirsty," said the leader, "I could drink his blood."

"Hark!"

Both halted and looked back. The grey dawn was breaking. Behind they heard shouts and the sound of a horse's hoofs approaching at a gallop.

But they saw something that still more greatly disconcerted them—a head and shoulders rising over the splash-board of the cart, and heard, "Bo!"

The men let go the shafts—they ran—ran as fast as they could in their then condition of exhaustion. Swiftly along the road came the farmer, galloping, swearing as he galloped in pursuit of his lost cart.

Rutland is a small county; so small that the story of how Joseph Samuel, the policeman was run away by thieves flew all over it, and it had reached his native village before the arrival of Joseph Samuel himself, who was dismissed the force.

Joseph Samuel has returned to the bellows. He blows them for his father at the present day.

VANISHED IN THE MOONLIGHT

VANISHED IN THE MOONLIGHT

I was engaged to be married. My mother had died when I was aged fifteen, and since her death I had been my father's housekeeper and companion. My brother, two years my elder, was at the bar.

We occupied a suburban villa residence —rather superior to a villa; it had a large garden in front and a drive to the door, and a terrace on which the drawing room window

opened. We liked to regard ourselves as a cut above suburban villa people. We kept a carriage and pair, and had a butler, and had a great aunt who was an Honourable, and so I believe we were what we believed ourselves to be.

My father had been in South Africa. He had made his fortune in the Kimberley diamond mines, and had made it somewhat rapidly, having had the good fortune to find a number of stones of great size and good water.

One of the finest he had not disposed of. He kept it as a specimen, or as a nest egg. It was rather a cause of anxiety to us, as he carried it about with him in his purse.

He would not trust it in the house. He thought it safer on his person. So it might have been, had he not been wont to produce it after dinner, as well as at other times when servants were present, and show it, and expatiate on its beauty and value.

We had a butler whom we did not like. We called him "The Bandit," from his wild and savage appearance. His dress was right enough, but he had a forbidding face.

He conducted himself harmlessly enough till on one occasion he got drunk, at a dinner-party we gave. Then my father dismissed him, and he took up his residence not far from our house, where there was a

sort of slum inhabited by persons of no very fixed occupation.

My father refused him a character, or rather he said that if he were called on for a character, he would state the truth concerning the man, and not give a false character, as is so often done out of good nature, in order to give a servant another chance. It is singular that employers should be so considerate for the employed and so little considerate for their brother employers as to let them engage servants whom they know to be unsatisfactory and likely to give trouble.

"The Bandit," of course, knew that my father carried the diamond about with him

It was odd that "The Bandit," should have settled in the neighbourhood.

These two thoughts did not strike me, or strike me as connected till later.

My father was, I daresay, somewhat troubled at my engagement. He would lose me, as I was going to India with my husband, and, as I have said, I was his companion and house-keeper after my mother's death. But my father was not a man of demonstrativeness, and he made no show of greatly concerning himself at my loss. He took the prospect more coolly than I perhaps liked.

My father belonged to a good family. The Honourable great-aunt was his aunt,

not my mother's. He had been intended for the Church and a family living, but had preferred going to South Africa, and eventually, through the death of an uncle, some money came to him, which, in addition to what he had made in the diamond fields, enabled him to retire and live up to the Honourable aunt—I mean keep a carriage and pair, and a butler, and have a house a cut above a villa.

In a couple of months I was to be married.

One evening I sat up late thinking, over the fire.

The season was October, the air was a little chilly but not cold, so a fire was

desirable but not necessary. The blinds and curtains were not drawn, at my desire, as the hunter's moon was shining and was nearly full, and I am at all times fond of moonlight. When one is in love and anticipating marriage one simply adores it. So I had told the servant not to close the shutters and draw the blinds. The windows were such as are called French, that is to say they opened to the ground, and were windows and doors in one. They commanded the terrace.

It was my father's habit every evening before retiring to smoke a pipe on the terrace, and as I sat by the fire, with the lamp turned down so as to enjoy the moonlight, I could

see him walking up and down the terrace. I could see him if I chose ; I actually saw his shadow. The moonlight fell through the two long window on the polished oak floor and Oriental rugs ; as I sat I saw his shadow flung on the floor before window No. 1, then a couple of seconds after on the floor before window No. 2. Then ensued a minute as he walked to the end of the terrace, then in reverse order came his shadow in the light of No. 2, and then after a momentary interval his shadow obscured the light from No. 1

How long this went on I cannot tell. Presently it stopped. I did not particularly notice when ; I was thinking of my presents.

Some time after the butler came in and asked if he should lock up the house and shut the shutters. I answered "Yes," as my father, I said, had done his pipe and come in. I concluded he had come in because I no longer saw his shadow, and I judged from his invariable habit of always coming indoors when he had done his pipe.

Next morning I came down to breakfast as usual, and waited for him.

"Please, miss," said the housemaid, "master left the lamp burning in the study all night."

"Did he?" said I. It was unusual; he was so methodical in all he did.

The tea would spoil unless he came quickly. I rang for the butler. "Will you call your master? He must have overslept himself. Say there is grilled partridge and it is getting cold, and the tea will taste bitter."

Presently the butler returned.

"Please, miss, the master is not in his room. He has not been there all night. The bed is undisturbed. The hot water not taken in."

My father had disappeared.

Not a trace of him could we find. Suddenly, in the moonlight, he had vanished. The last I had seen of him was his shadow cast on the drawing-room floor on the

previous night. As I considered, I could not say in which direction I had seen his shadow pass for the last time. I could not tell within half-an-hour when I had last seen it. I could not, indeed, swear that the shadow I had seen was that of my father, as I had not looked at him through the window.

All that I could say was that it was his custom, about that time, every night, to walk the terrace, and that therefore probably he had walked it the night he disappeared, and his shadow it probably had been that I had seen flung on the drawing room floor.

Days, weeks passed, and not a trace of my father was found. I had not the smallest

doubt as to what had become of him, nor had my brother, nor any of the neighbourhood. "The Bandit" had murdered him and made away with his body for the sake of the diamond.

Of course we took action the moment we were sure he had absolutely vanished. The police watched "The Bandit," they searched his house, where they did find some articles that had belonged to my father, but which the ex-butler protested he had purloined whilst in our service. There was a handkerchief that had my father's initials, a tie to which I could swear, and a breastpin, but I could not be sure that he had worn these when he disappeared.

My father did not dress for dinner when we were alone, so that he may have worn the tie and breast pin on the last occasion we dined together. I cannot say; I had not noticed what he then wore.

Nothing further to compromise the man was discovered, but that was not wonderful —four days had elapsed since the disappearance of my father before the police searched "The Bandit's" lodgings; time enough for him to make away with the diamond. What he had done with my father's body, where he had secreted it, we could never find.

We could not imagine how he had lured my father away from the terrace and down

a back lane, where we conjectured the murder had been committed; not that we found evidence there of a struggle, but that it was the only place in the immediate neighbourhood where a murder could have been committed.

We had no moral doubt whatever that "The Bandit" had murdered my father, and had murdered him in the back lane I mention, that he had made him insensible by means of chloroform before despatching him, and that my poor father's body was secreted somewhere near our villa.

Nevertheless, it was not possible to bring the murder home to the man, and when he disappeared shortly after, we were all

morally certain he had gone away to enjoy the profits of the sale of the diamond—cut, may be, into two or three, so as to render it incapable of identification.

After a while—eight months—I married and went to India. My brother let the house, as he was unmarried.

Five years after, I returned from India, with a couple of children, whom the climate of India did not suit. As the house was then unlet, I took it off my brother, although associated with such painful recollections. The Honourable great aunt came to pay me a visit and make the acquaintance of her great-great nephew and niece, the latter of whom was called after her.

One moonlit evening, after the children had been sent to bed, we were sitting together in the drawing-room, when we began talk of my poor father.

"It is rather odd when you come to think of it," said the Honourable great aunt, "that Jack may be said to have disappeared before."

"How so, aunt?"

"He was intended for the Church, but didn't fancy it. The living of Willowslop-cum-Studge, was a family living and intended for him. We all wished it, but when sent to Oxford he did not read, and was ploughed at his examinations and then, ashamed to be seen, dashed away to South Africa, and

there, as it happened, did well."

As we talked, a shadow passed before the window No. 1; a second, and it passed before the window No. 2; then a minute, and in reversed order it passed No. 2, and in another moment, No. 1.

Our hearts stood still. I was nigh on fainting. A minute later—a step—my father's step in the hall; another minute—he—not his shadow, he in the flesh—was in the drawing-room, and I in his arms.

How came it all about?

"My dear Ethel," said my father, "to tell you the truth, I had had enough of civilisation. Before I got too old, I thought I'd make another venture at free life in the

wilds. I've been cattle ranching, I've been a cow-boy—enjoyed myself famously. When Tom was getting on at the Bar, you about to be married and going to India, I did not see that I had any particular call to keep me in England. I had grown deadly tired of suburban villa life, of social conventionalities, sick to disgust of English politics; I heard that a Society paper was going to send an interviewer to draw me out as the wealthy diamond-man, and so the fit came on me to hook it.

"I hooked it once before, and told no one; so I hooked it again and told no one. I was ashamed to tell the truth—that I was dead sick of civilisation, that I loathed

it to the toes. But I was; so I bolted.

"I sold my diamond in New York. By the way, I've not made money this time; I've lost it. By the way, also, I've had a chap put over me in the ranche that was my butler here once; we called him "The Bandit." He told me he'd been accused of having murdered me, and the accusation had hung on him, and forced him to leave Old England. He is not a bad chap; he advanced me the money to come home, and sent his respects to you, Ethel, and asked me to tell you that he did not rob and murder me and conceal my corpse."

"Oh, papa! Are you now home for good?"

"Yes, I think so—but can't say. I shall have to hook it again some day; but that will be into another world altogether.

CRAZY JANE

CRAZY JANE

In Sussex a great bank of chalk downs stands up as if set as a natural sea-wall against the encroachments of the waves.

Nothing can be conceived more barren, more dreary than this bank on its sea-ward slope. On the east coast of England—in Essex, in Lincoln, in Suffolk, and Norfolk —the energy of man has reclaimed tracts of low-lying land from the sea, and has held

back the tide by erecting sea-walls that have a long gradually-declining escarpement towards the water. Against these the waves fling themselves, are broken, run up them, lose their force, and sneak back discomfited. On the land side these walls have an abrupt fall. Now the south coast of Sussex seems by nature to have been thus constructed as a great type after which men should build and recover land. About three or four miles inland—perhaps a little more—begins what is called the Weald, a flat, rich, and beautiful land, well wooded, full of sweet villages and gentle pastures, with here and there an undulation, like a fold of green velvet, and here and there a pond occupying a

deserted iron quarry. From this Wealden district rises to the south the abrupt scar of the South Downs, a mighty rampart of chalk, tilted up with its long easy slope seawards.

Did the mighty primeval ocean rage against the coast where now stand Brighton, Worthing and Shoreham? Did that great natural sea-wall of chalk restrain its waves and protect the Weald from inundation? We cannot say.

At one point in the summit of the chalk barrier is a trench cut deep through the soft white rock, and this is called the Devil's Dyke. The story told of that is that the enemy of mankind, looking down on the fertile Weald, envied its beauty and richness,

and set to work one night to dig through the barrier, so as to let the ocean in, to submerge the fair district. But he could do this only in one night. His power to work evil was limited. If he could make his canal before cock-crow, well ; but he might on no account resume the work if left incomplete in one night. Now there was a cottage on the height, and in it lived an old Goodie, who was roused by the sound of digging and delving in the night. The night was dark, dark as Erebus ; she opened her casement and peeped forth. Nothing was visible, but the earth quaked under the efforts made by Mephistopheles. Then the Goodie, being an old fool, lit a candle, held it outside the

window and screamed out, " Who's there? What are you a-doing? " Now a cock saw the candle, and thinking it was the first glimmer of dawn, began to crow. Then the evil one threw away his spade and fled in a rage. And, lo! there, in the dyke, is shown the half-finished work and the unejected shovelful of earth.

Such is the legend. In reality, no doubt, the dyke is a very ancient aboriginal fortification.

Now, mark a wonderful provision of nature.

All the rain that falls along the range of chalk hills sinks in, soaks down, and might sink away to—goodness knows where, but

that, beneath the chalk lies a bed of very dense clay, through which the water cannot descend, and between the chalk and clay is strewn a narrow film of sand called the green-sand, there hardly thicker than your hand. When the water has percolated through the chalk hills and is stopped by the clay, out it runs, on the inland scarp through the green-sand in a thousand crystal, cool and beautiful springs, thoroughly purified by this perfect natural filter.

On the inland flank of the South Downs, in a little coomb or valley scooped out of the chalk, gushed out nine of these springs and fed a tarn or lake, not natural, but formed by an embankment thrown up to

make a reservoir for a mill. Above this lake set in the lap of the downs were clumps of Scotch pines, and a wood of beech, in spring full of the purple and the white-scented wood orchids; on the downs about grew the quaintly beautiful bee-orchids, rare elsewhere save on chalk.

In a solitary cottage under the hill, in a shady spot where the sun rarely came, lived a widow and her daughter. The widow was very infirm, crippled with rheumatism, and was allowed eighteen-pence a week and a loaf by the parish. She was too weak and helpless to earn anything for herself, and she could not have subsisted, she and her child, on eighteen-pence and one loaf, had it not

been for certain means of acquiring money that the neighbourhood afforded. The South Downs chalk hills abound in hedgehogs. They are to be found in burrows in great numbers, and at evening, when the dew is falling, the side of the Down may be seen alive with these little creatures scampering about seeking their prey. The widow's girl, Jane, a young girl, uncouth in form, with low brow and dull unintelligent eyes, was clever in finding hedgehogs, and these she carried about coiled up in a basket, and sold them to people who were troubled with slugs and snails in their gardens, or with cockroaches and blackbeetles in their kitchens. She got a shilling for each hedge-

hog, and could, had the demand required it, have found a hedgehog *per diem*, which would have brought her in 365 shillings in the year or £18. 5s., a handsome income. But, unfortunately, the public were not athirst for hedgehogs; and the market was soon glutted. Consequently Jane had to seek other means of earning money. She found dormice in the woods, and as there were two large schools for boys, Hurstpierpoint and Lancing within a walk, and as in schools for boys the passion for the acquisition of dormice is insatiable, "Crazy Jane," as the dull-witted girl was called, found that she could sell at fourpence each as many dormice as she could find. But then the dormice were

only to be caught when hybernating. In summer they were too wideawake to allow themselves to be captured.

Another source of revenue was offered by the orchis plants on the Downs. Crazy Jane dug up the roots, collected bunches of the flowers, and trudged with them to Worthing or Brighton, where she was able to dispose of her flowers and of her tubers. Thus, the widow and her daughter had not merely eighteenpence and a loaf to live on, but they lived also on dormice, hedgehogs, and orchis bulbs. She had long distances to go to dispose of her goods had Crazy Jane, but what mattered that to her? She was sturdily built, strong as a horse, and dis-

regarded all kinds of bad weather. Jane had had no schooling. She had been forced to attend the National School, but had been unable to acquire her letters; she could not write a pothook on the slate, or do a calculation apart from hedgehogs, dormice, and bulbs. In all particulars relative to her business she was keen—keen in exacting every penny, able to reckon up her gains; but apart from hedgehogs, dormice, and bulbs she could not count and sum. So she had been dismissed her school as mentally incapable of acquiring knowledge. This permission to her to withdraw was a great relief to Jane, as she had been the butt of ridicule of the scholars. Every

dunce could crow over Jane as more stupid than himself. The witty would-be wags poked fun at her, the malicious tortured and irritated her. Jane was usually good-natured, but when angered flew into paroxysms of mad fury that occasioned merriment to the ill-conditioned, and often provoked the interference of the master. Jane would have come off worse than she did at school had it not been for Jim Thacker, the miller's son at Ninewells, who constituted himself her protector, and thrashed the insolent boys who tormented Crazy Jane, and screened her from their jibes.

This protection he afforded her awoke on the poor dull-witted girl's part the liveliest

devotion; a devotion that was irksome to the boy, for she followed him like a dog, shrank behind him at the least threat of annoyance, clung to him when in trouble, and was uneasy when he was out of her sight. This attracted notice in the school, and provoked merriment. She was called Jim Thacker's dog. And like a dog she seemed—faithful, regardful, a little too demonstrative of affection, but exacting nothing for this fidelity but an occasional nod and word. It was a relief to Jim when Crazy Jane was excused school as mentally deficient, and it was a relief to her, because thenceforth she could wander, unrestrained, over the Downs, hunting hedgehogs and dormice, and picking flowers.

One day—it was in spring—Jim Thacker was walking near the mill pond, when he heard screams of terror and pain, apparently, and saw Crazy Jane pursued and attacked by the male swan of the pair that lived in the pond. In her search for orchis bulbs she had approached too nearly where the female swan was sitting on her eggs. and the male in wild fury had flown to the protection of his mate, and considering Jane as an enemy threatening his mate and her eggs, had rushed at her with flapping wings and outstretched beak. An excited swan is not a foe to laugh at; the strength of its wings is so great that a blow of them has been known to break the leg of a horse; moreover, with

its great beak it can nip and hurt. The flap of the great wings, the discordant notes that issued from the long neck, the menacing bill, had paralysed Jane, and in trying to fly she had stumbled over a root and fallen.

Jim snatched up a pronged stick and ran to her aid, calling to the swan. He reached her as the bird was driving at her with his bill, and thrusting the fork adroitly under the neck, held the angry bird back.

"Now Jane," said he, "get up and run away whilst I keep the swan at bay."

But she was so bewildered with her fright that it was some time before she could understand what to do, and when finally, she did scramble away, she had not the

strength and breath to go far, but sank among the old leaves at a little distance from the pool, sobbing, trembling, with her black hair scattered about her shoulders and face.

Jim came to her and helped her to her feet, brought her to the mill, and there his mother soothed the fears of the frightened girl, gave her milk and bread and honey, and finally dismissed her with a sixpence in her pocket.

After this, Crazy Jane became somewhat of a nuisance again, as she had been at the school. She had come to regard Jim with a veneration that almost reached adoration. He was the only person who had ever stood up for her and defended her against

enemies. He had never laughed at her, played tricks with her, teased her; but had ever been ready to come to her aid when powerless to protect herself. She hung about the mill, not for milk and bread and honey, not for a sixpence, but only that she might get a sight of Jim, and receive a kind and cheery word from him. She would have overwhelmed him with hedgehogs had he been willing to have one; would have filled his boxes with dormice, had he expressed the desire to have one. There was nothing she would not do for him to show gratitude and regard. And Jim's mother, Mrs. Thacker, made use of the girl now and then to take messages or do commissions for her

to Steyning, or to Hurst, or to Brighton, or Worthing—commissions which she executed with fidelity, and for which she doggedly, even sullenly, refused payment. It was reward enough to her to be allowed to see Jim, and to hear him say, "What an active girl you are, Jane!"

On Sundays, when Jim went to church, Jane was always to be seen hanging about in the neighbourhood of the mill, waiting to follow him. She was in her ragged, dingy, week-day dress, for she had no change of attire. And when he started with his book under his arm, she followed at a distance, and when he entered the sacred building she remained outside, hidden be-

hind one of the gravestones,for she dare not stay seated on the churchyard wall, least she be teased, or perhaps pulled off, and have stones thrown at her by those boys and young men who congregate about churchyard gates and do not enter the church.

When service was over, and Jim returned home, then, from her hiding-place, rose the crazy girl also, and followed him back, never getting very near, always maintaining a respectful distance, but never allowing him to get out of her sight.

This, naturally provoked comment, and caused Jim annoyance. He spoke to Jane about it, remonstrated, and forbade her to pursue him in such a manner. This made

her cry, but not abandon the practice, and he was finally obliged to endure what could not be altered, hoping that in course of time she would herself tire of the dog-like pursuit.

But he was mistaken. For her dull mind this allegiance to Jim, expressed so uncouthly, had become a sort of religion that bound her, years passed and her conduct remained the same; she neither pressed further on his attention nor wearied of her devotion. The habit of following him, of hanging about the mill had, become part of her life, with which she could not break. So time passed. Jim had grown from boyhood to manhood, and had become miller in the room of his father, deceased; and there had

been changes in the cottage also ; the widow was dead, and Jane remained there lonely, but content, pursuing her usual avocations, and obtaining a small allowance from the parish. She had grown from girlhood into womanhood, but without any mental development. She was as dull-witted as ever, and in addition had acquired a jerky motion of her head and shoulders whenever spoken to—a nervous agitation which was but St. Vitus's dance. A quiet, harmless girl she remained. There was talk about removing her to the workhouse, but the project was fortunately for her never carried out. She would have pined and died under the restraints and routine of the Union.

In due time Jim Thacker was married. He had fallen in love with a bright, sharp, pretty girl, the daughter of a farmer. There was no impediment on either side, and they were married. Few were better pleased than Crazy Jane, who went to the church, but did not enter it, and looked on, laughing and clapping her hands from behind a gravestone, when the bridal party left the church.

"Oh fine! fine!" exclaimed Jane; "Now Jim Thacker has got a pretty wife. Fine! fine! fine!"

And when Jim sent her some of the wedding feast, cake and oranges and pie, she capered and laughed and cried alter-

nately, and then, all at once, sat herself down in the wood, and a mood of sulkiness and sadness came over her, she knew not wherefore, and she threw up the old brown beech leaves over her head, and let them rain about her, as though she were burying herself under the fallen leaves.

This mood lasted only for a day, and then passed. She remained as before—good-natured, following Jim as a dog, but never intruding herself on him and his young wife.

The latter did not take kindly to Jane. She was annoyed at her persistent haunting of the neighbourhood of the mill, by her animal-like devotion to Jim, and remonstrated with her husband.

"What can I do?" he asked; "the poor crazy creature does no harm."

"It is absurd—it is scandalous," said the young wife petulantly. "It makes you an object of ridicule throughout the country."

Jim's mother, and after her death Jim himself, had often sent broken meat, a blanket, some little comfort, perhaps a few bushels of coal, to Crazy Jane; but the new mistress at the mill forbade these charities. "Let her be starved out," she said. "The creature is a nuisance. Who can be confident with a mad woman so near? She may set fire to the mill, she may murder me, if I go alone into the woods. And."—she pouted, "I should not be surprised if she

were to attempt it, as she is jealous of me. She has hitherto engrossed so much of Jim's attention, and now thinks I rob her of what should be hers."

"How can you talk such trash?" said Jim, annoyed.

So Crazy Jane was the occasion of the first little disagreement between Jim and his wife.

It is a satisfaction to some natures to have an opportunity for grumbling, an excuse for venting their vexation. Mrs. Thacker had a fretful, irritable temper, and the presence of Crazy Jane furnished her with an occasion for giving tongue to her annoyance, and scolding and finding fault

with her husband. She knew perfectly that she had no real grounds for her jealousy, and the fact that she knew this excused her in her own mind for fretfulness towards her husband on the subject. Some women regard their ebullitions of ill-temper and jealousy as justified by the fact that they are unreasonable. Jim was so good-natured that he did not become angry, and his good nature provoked his wife.

So time passed, and Mrs. Thacker bore her husband a little daughter; and the child grew, and as it grew became an object of intense, affectionate regard to Crazy Jane. Indeed, it seemed as though her devotion to Jim had been transferred to the

child. She hovered about the mill as before, but now it was that she might watch the child, not the father, and she seemed quite pleased when she could offer the little girl a bunch of wild strawberries, or a posy of lilies of the valley.

This also gave annoyance to Mrs. Thacker. She did not like her child to be near the mad girl—or woman—she was a girl no longer. "Who can say what she might do? She might carry her off, as the gipsies do!"

"But where could she carry her to?"

"I don't like her to touch the child; she is not clean."

Time advanced. It seemed to stand still only with Crazy Jane, who had settled into

one fixed type of face and figure that never altered; and no one looking at her could guess her age. Her face was childlike, it was so simple; but her figure was too formed for that of a child. Her black hair showed no trace of change. In spite of the many vexations occasioned her by Mrs. Thacker, she remained in the cottage. The miller's wife went to the parish guardians to complain, and urge that the creature should be removed to the Union. She went to the police, to complain that the girl was a menace to herself and the child. She visited the village doctor, to insist that Jane was mad, and ought to be in an asylum; she endeavoured to incite the

rector to take steps to get her put into some charitable institution; she had repeated squabbles with her husband—all in vain.

Time advanced, and when little Mabel, the child, was twelve years old, Crazy Jane was still in the cottage unmolested. One winter's day, Mabel had been sent over the Downs, a walk of three miles, to her grandmother's house, the mother of Mrs. Thacker. It was the old lady's birthday, and the child had gone with congratulations and a present from the miller's wife.

The day had been warm and fine, but towards afternoon there ensued a sudden change, and unexpectedly the wind shifted to the north-east, with black and threatening

clouds, and there fell a blinding, dense snow.

A little uneasiness was felt by Jim and his wife about the child, but not much, for they concluded that Mabel had been detained by her grandmother. "Surely," said Mrs. Thacker, "my mother would never let the child start when there was a threat of a change."

"But the threat came with the change—at once; no one could have looked for it."

"If that be the case, you or someone had better go to my mother's and enquire."

Jim Thacker thought so as well. He drew on his thick coat, tied a kerchief over his head to hold on his cap, for the wind on the Downs blew a gale, and started.

Three hours later he returned, covered with snow.

"Is Mabel home?" he enquired as he entered the room.

"No—had she left?" Mrs. Thacker was near on fainting. She saw by her husband's face that he was alarmed.

"Yes," he answered gravely. "She left her grandmother's before the change."

"Oh Jim! Jim!" The poor mother could say no more, but burst into tears, and sank with her head on the table.

There was no time to waste in lamentations. Jim called to his man. A lantern was lighted, and the two with sticks went forth again into the storm. Meantime the

darkness had become complete. The wind raged, the snow fell in huge flakes against the windows like dabs of plaster. It covered roof, ground, walls. Mrs. Thacker was left alone in the house with only a maid. Her agitation, her alarm, were great. She loved her child passionately. How could a child struggle through such a storm and beat a way through the snow? Every way was deep buried, the landmarks obscured. The child would stray on the downs, perhaps sink with weariness, and sleep the fatal sleep of death; perhaps in its wanderings come, blinded with snow to the edge of a chalk quarry, fall over, and be dashed to pieces.

The night wore on. The father, with his man, had gone over the ground again between the farmhouse where lived the mother of his wife and his own mill, but had discovered no traces of his little one. He called up men from a cottage or two he passed. He got help from the farm to which the child had gone. As the hours passed he became more hopeless. He hoped for one thing only—to find his child's body, for he deemed it impossible for her to be alive under the circumstances. If she had strayed on the Wold, there was no house on the Downs into which she could have been received.

The condition of mind of Mrs. Thacker

was worse than that of her husband. He was battling with the storm, searching; she was condemned to inactivity, could only hope and pray, have hot water ready, bricks heated, in the event of her child's return, to bathe her, to place against her body to restore heat.

Once she was frightened. She heard a crash against the front door, a blow that near beat it in, and then all was still. What was it? Dare she open? Then she supposed there had been a fall of a mass of snow from the roof, and that this had produced the sound. Ten minutes later she heard voices—her husband and the men returning—and she ran to the door to throw

it open, and ask news. As she did so, something—a great heap of snow, but something besides, something on which the snow had heaped itself, fell inwards.

A cry! Mrs. Thacker stooped, Jim ran up with the lantern. It was Crazy Jane, with the child in her arms. The child asleep, and Jane—dead.

How and where the silly girl had found Mabel was never known. All the child could remember was, that Jane had discovered her as she rambled about in the snow, and that Jane had carried her till she fell asleep. How far Jane had wandered, how far borne the heavy burden, could not be told, but it must have been far, for she

had died through over-exhaustion at the very moment when she had reached the door of the house, the outside of which she had watched for many years, the inside of which she had not been allowed for long to enter.

And so—faithful to the last—the poor dull-minded creature had repaid in good measure, pressed down and running over, the little acts of kindness shown her in years gone by, by Jim at school, and Jim by the pool, defending her, at no cost to himself, first from children and then from the swan.

THE END

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